

New phase of capitalist crisis

FIGHT FOR JOBS

Greedy bosses profit, unemployment expands, wages sink

By Fred Goldstein

The news that while the economy grew at an annual rate of 5.7 percent in the last quarter, there was simultaneously a net loss of 208,000 jobs, indicates that U.S. capitalism has entered a new phase — the phase of the “jobless recovery” with increasingly intractable and growing long-term mass unemployment.

Features of this new phase of capitalism include the intensified exploitation of those who still have jobs, characterized by the lowering of wages and reduction in hours worked, a massive shift to temporary and part-time workers who can be hired and freely fired while being treated as “disposable” labor, and withholding the wages of low-wage workers. This is accompanied by a crisis in youth unemployment, continued layoffs and the shrinking of the economy by corporations as they seek to restore profits and end secure employment.

According to government reports, the last two quarters have seen economic expansion, but in those six months there has been a net loss of 735,000 jobs. At the same time that the Bureau of Labor Statistics loudly announced a 5.7 percent annual economic growth rate, it quietly reported that 470,000 workers filed new claims for unemployment insurance in the week ending Jan. 23.

In fact, the actual growth of the economy was much lower than the numbers indicate. During a downturn, businesses stop manufacturing new items and fill new orders from the inventory of products that have already been manufactured. This is called a drawdown of inventory.

The way the government deals with inventory in calculating economic growth is to call it “growth” when businesses don’t draw as much on inventory as they did in the previous period. In other words, the government adds numbers to the growth figures that do not represent an increase in production but only a slowing down of the dipping into inventory to fill new orders. If the inventory factor is removed

from the 5.7 percent growth number, it is really 2.3 percent.

A thimble to bail out an ocean

President Barack Obama in his State of the Union speech changed his message from health care to jobs. Before and after the speech he stumped the country talking about creating jobs. His program consists primarily of throwing \$5,000 tax breaks to small businesses for hiring new workers and additional tax breaks on

Continued on page 4

AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY

HAITI

Roots & resistance

Carter G. Woodson

6

7



BANGLADESH
Revolutionaries meet

WW PHOTO: SARA FLOUNDERS

WHO CENSORS THE INTERNET?

11

DEFEND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

5

PADDING THE BALLOT BOX

EDITORIAL 10

‘GAUZE NOT GUNS’ FOR HAITI

8

New York, Jan. 29. Marchers protest U.S. military take-over of Haiti.



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Howard Zinn’s work: a weapon in the class struggle

By Shelley Ettinger

On occasion someone makes such a significant contribution to the cause that the work speaks for itself and, assessed objectively, functions as a weapon in the class struggle.

Such an occasion was the life and such a contribution was the work of Howard Zinn.

Zinn, who died on Jan. 27 at age 87, was called “the people’s historian.” Everybody knew who “the people”

he strove to serve were: the working class and oppressed nationalities. This is why so many worldwide are mourning his death.

Howard Zinn was best known for his groundbreaking study first published in 1980, “A People’s History of the United States: 1492-Present.” From its opening chapter, titled “Columbus, the Indians, and Human Progress,” this book announced itself as something new and different.

This was history recounted from an unaccustomed perspective. Unlike virtually every other telling of U.S. history, either academic or popular, and most strikingly unlike the standard textbooks used in schools across the country, “A People’s History” was unabashedly on the side of the masses of people — that is, the workers and oppressed.

The conventional version had claimed to be objective. Actually, it skewed the whole sweep of history. In the telling that was fed to generation upon generation of schoolchildren, the invaders, exploiters and oppressors were portrayed as heroes: inventors, explorers, adventurers, saviors.

Colonial occupations and imperialist wars were depicted as noble self-sacrificing endeavors by an enlightened, civilizing force. Technological development, scientific innovation, societal advances were all the result of impressive strokes of genius by individual Great White Men.

The vast majority of humanity was nowhere to be seen. Not as actors, not as creators, not as drivers of the engine of history. Not even, for the most part, as oppressed by



Howard Zinn and recording artist Lupe Fiasco

important fact of early U.S. history: the theft of the lands and genocide of the Indigenous nations of North America.

This was the landscape of history. Then came Howard Zinn.

What he did, first and foremost, was strip the mantle of impartiality from those other histories. Every telling is biased, he said. My bias is on the side of those who until now have been made invisible. Then he proceeded to bring them onto the page.

The Native peoples, fighting to defend their lands and their lives. The Africans shackled and enslaved — and rebelling. The immigrants shivering in tenements, and the workers fighting for unions. The women demanding equal rights.

These were the heroes of Howard Zinn’s history. And history has never been the same.

Bourgeois historians still constitute the majority of those whose works are published. They are still considered “mainstream” while historians in Zinn’s tradition are dismissed as “radical.” But ever since the first edition of “A People’s History” was published, an alternative has been available.

Zinn was not the first or only historian to tell the class truth. There are excellent explicit Marxist analyses that deserve to be widely read. But Zinn’s works, because of their uniquely popular character and the way they passed from hand to hand, played a role like few other books in our time. □

the social and economic forces these standard histories uniformly applauded as natural, positive developments. For example, the trans-Atlantic slave trade was generally treated as cursorily as possible; the central role of slave labor in the creation and enrichment of U.S. capitalism was mentioned not at all.

Neither was the other project, the project that along with the system of chattel slavery is the most

WORKERS WORLD
this week...

★ In the U.S.

Fight for jobs.....	1
Howard Zinn	2
Hilda Bell Roberts	2
Walking while Black in Pittsburgh.....	3
Students, transit workers rally outside of the MTA	3
Student activist on Michigan speaking tour	3
Building on ‘no concessions’ vote at Ford Auto	4
Struggle for reproductive justice continues	5
Protest supports Mexican electrical workers	5
The role of a revolutionary newspaper	5
Carter G. Woodson & African-American History Month	6
Racist, anti-poor insults aim to split working class	8
Sen. Scott Brown in pocket of rightists, bankers	10
How the U.S. – and Google – censors the Internet	11

★ Around the world

African culture, resistance live in Haiti.....	6
Haitian community launches campaign for teen’s return ...	7
Help the people of Haiti reject military occupation.....	8
‘Gauze not guns’ demanded for Haiti.....	8
U.N. OKs illegal U.S. takeover of Haiti.....	9
Expanding the war to Yemen, Part 3	9
Bangladesh convention offers revolutionary view	11

★ Editorials

Buying elections	10
------------------------	----

★ Noticias En Español

Las elecciones en Massachusetts y los desafíos futuros	12
---	----

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Hilda Bell Roberts, anti-fascist

Hilda Bell Roberts, born in 1915 and raised in Philadelphia of immigrant parents, a lifelong progressive activist and a volunteer nurse in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade during the 1936-1939 Spanish Civil War fighting against fascist dictator Francisco Franco, passed away in the San Francisco Bay Area last Sept. 23. On Jan. 29, in her honor the Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists held a special showing of the Academy Award-nominated documentary film, “Forever Activists: Stories from the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.”



Hilda Bell Roberts

WWW PHOTO: JOAN MARQUARDT

Following the film there was a special advance showing of a portion of a 1986 interview with Hilda from the Abraham Lincoln Brigade archives. Hilda, who lived in Berkeley, has already been greatly missed at local progressive rallies and demonstrations, which she had continued to participate in until the very last few months of her life, despite suffering from a very rare form of blood cancer that affected her mobility and ability to remember but against which she waged a courageous struggle.

Hilda Bell Roberts, ¡Presente!

— Report and photo by Joan Marquardt

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Walking while Black in Pittsburgh

By Sean Schafron
Pittsburgh

Around 11 p.m. on Jan. 12, another tragic incident demonstrated the racist establishment's brutal punishment of the crime of "walking while Black" in Pittsburgh.

Jordan Miles, an 18-year-old viola player and honors student at the prestigious Creative and Performing Arts High School (CAPA), was walking from his mother's home to his grandmother's home where he frequently stayed, when he was inexplicably and brutally attacked by three white Pittsburgh police officers.

According to the police report, Miles was standing against a building "as if he was trying to avoid being seen." The police said they observed something under the young man's jacket which they thought to be a gun but turned out, according to their report, to be a bottle of Mountain Dew.

Miles maintains he had nothing in his jacket and seldom even drinks the beverage. He relates a different and more terrifying story. As he was walking he noticed

a white car with three men inside. They jumped out of the vehicle and shouted, "Where's the money?" "Where's the gun?" and "Where's the drugs?" Afraid of being robbed, Miles turned towards his mother's home when he slipped and fell on an icy sidewalk.

Before he could get back up, Miles reported, "That's when they started beating me, punching, kicking me, choking me." It wasn't until about 15 minutes later, when uniformed officers arrived in a police van, that Miles realized he was being arrested. The attackers never identified themselves as police, and when he was handcuffed Miles assumed he was being abducted.

The officers have been identified as Richard Ewing, David Sisak and Michael Saldutte. All three failed to appear at Miles' Jan. 18 hearing on charges of resisting arrest and aggravated assault.

Miles had no criminal record prior to the attack.

Pictures taken and released by his mother, Terez Miles, show the young man's face covered with bruises, with his right eye swollen shut and a bald spot

where officers tore dreadlocks from his head. "My son is 150 pounds and 5-foot-6. There was no need for this degree of violence and brutality for someone of this stature," she said. He was treated twice at West Penn Hospital for his injuries.

The media picked up on this horrific story, prompting Pittsburgh Mayor Luke Ravenstahl to state, "The incident was very troubling to me, and we're taking it very seriously." Ravenstahl also told reporters, "It seems as if there was a tremendous amount of force used." However, not only have the offending thugs not been fired or even suspended, they were merely taken off of plainclothes duty and reassigned in uniform.

With nationwide attention increasing, the FBI opened a fact-finding investigation to determine if Miles' civil rights were violated.

The public outrage against this crime has been swift. On Jan. 26 about 60 CAPA students were joined by concerned residents and activists on a march through downtown Pittsburgh chanting, "Justice for Jordan!"

Outside Pittsburgh City Council chambers, Black Political Empowerment Project Director Tim Stevens spoke passionately as many of Miles' schoolmates and others pushed back tears. "I cannot fathom how the Pittsburgh police could, in any reasonable way, defend the beating, stomping, choking and kicking of an unarmed, 5'6", 150-pound teenager by three armed police officers. Simply moving the police officers from their former undercover status to uniform status does not properly handle this very troubling situation. These officers are still on the street to possibly brutalize other innocent, unsuspecting citizens."

Believing her son was racially profiled, Miles' mother may file a civil rights lawsuit once the criminal case is resolved. Pittsburgh's NAACP chapter has called for the three brutal officers to be fired and for all charges against Miles to be dropped. Chapter President M. Gayle Moss said, "He had robbed no one — no bank, no establishment, hijacked no car or caused anyone any harm. He was simply walking while Black." □

Students, transit workers rally outside MTA



A blatant attack has aroused a fightback in NYC's middle and high schools.

WWW PHOTO: TONY MURPHY

By Tony Murphy
New York

A dynamic student movement has risen up against the bank-controlled Metropolitan Transit Authority's provocative proposal to eliminate free student MetroCards. For the second time since this serious cut was announced, hundreds of high school students protested Feb. 1 outside the MTA's headquarters, chanting "MTA, we won't pay!"

The outrageous proposal has also prompted greater collaboration between students and Transit Workers Union Local 100, whose officers addressed the crowd and the media at the action. Along with student activists, speakers represented Sistas and Brothas United, Desis Rising Up and Moving, the Northwest Bronx Coalition, Make the Road New York, and Youth on the Move, as well as a handful of elected representatives.

The campaign to save student MetroCards is also a movement to defend public education — the MTA's proposal is the New York equivalent of cancelling school buses. This campaign is growing alongside the one against Mayor Bloomberg's attempt to close 19 schools and the March 4 Day to Defend Education, whose multiple actions at college campuses around the city will culminate in a march that ends at MTA headquarters.

The proposal to cancel free transportation for students is just the tip of the iceberg in a long list of cutbacks the MTA is planning — from layoffs of 700 transit workers to drastic cuts in Access-A-Ride, the program that serves disabled riders. Cancellation of bus routes all over New York and drastic cutbacks in subway service are also planned.

The MTA announced its proposal to cancel student passes immediately after its attempt to block the transit workers' raises failed in court. It has kept up an anti-worker campaign of propaganda in the media. This campaign claims that the workers' pay and benefits are too high, and this high cost is responsible for the cutbacks and fare hikes the MTA is imposing on riders with increasing frequency.

The MTA is the fifth-largest debtor in the country. The real source of the MTA's budget deficits is the crushing debt service the MTA keeps paying to banks and Wall Street interests — the same interests that have just rewarded their top officers and brokers with tens of billions of dollars in bonuses. □

Student activist on speaking tour

Larry Hales, a leader of the March 4 National Day of Action to Defend Education, began his Michigan tour Feb. 1 in Ann Arbor speaking to a group of student-workers at the William Monroe Trotter Multicultural Center at the University of Michigan. Hales, also a member of Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST), is touring Michigan the week of Jan. 31 to speak to student-workers at campuses, workplaces, community events and high schools to mobilize for March 4.

Hales will participate in a mass rally at Michigan State University Feb. 3, followed by a march to the State Capitol in Lansing, where students will demand an end to educational budget cuts. The students plan to confront right-wing tea partiers, who will stage an event at the Capitol that day. The Moratorium NOW! Coalition is also sponsoring a protest against the Michigan governor's state-of-the-state speech at the Capitol on Feb. 3, and will join with the students in solidarity.

Hales will end his tour with a March 4 organizing meeting in Detroit sponsored by FIST, the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice and the Moratorium NOW! Coalition. For more information, visit www.defendededucation.org.

— Report and photo by Bryan G. Pfeifer

Michigan



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Building on ‘no concessions’ vote at Ford

Martha Grevatt

On Jan. 23 over 100 autoworkers met in Detroit for a conference sponsored by rank-and-file activist groups Soldiers of Solidarity, Autoworkers Caravan and Factory Rats Unite to take up a truly compelling question: Where do we go from here?

In the past few years members of the UAW have seen their ranks in the workplace fall precipitously. At the same time, under threat of permanent job loss, workers at General Motors/Delphi, Ford, Chrysler and parts suppliers have been coerced into giving up pay and benefits that took decades of struggle to attain. During the GM and Chrysler bankruptcies workers there gave up the right to strike.

Just to ask, “Where do we go?” implied it is still possible for workers to fight back, and thus posed a viable alternative to resignation and despair.

African-American, Latino/a and white; women and men; retirees and youth, dozens of workers took the floor — not only to voice their anger at the auto companies and compliant union officials, but to search for ways to resist givebacks and downsizing. Participants came from Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, Minnesota, New York and Ontario, Canada.

The largest group of workers came from Ford. A lively discussion brought to life the grassroots, semispontaneous move-

ment that led to last fall’s defeat of contract modifications pushed by the UAW leadership that would have traded away the right to strike for a \$1,000 bonus and dubious promises of job security. The concessions — more or less equal to what GM and Chrysler workers gave up during the bankruptcies — went down by a margin of 3-to-1. This was the first time in UAW history that workers rejected contract language recommended by the leadership.

“We don’t want to lose that ability to strike,” stated Eric Truss, a shop floor activist in UAW Local 600 at the multiplant Ford Rouge complex. Truss came to the meeting with his mother, a Ford worker; his father, a Ford retiree; and his sister. Local 600 has a long history of militancy going back to struggles that led to union recognition in 1941.

Other workers described how multiple leaflets began appearing simultaneously, ranging from detailed explanations of why the concessions were bad to those with just two words: “Vote No.” At the same time an unprecedented number of local officials opposed the International’s recommendations. One worker held up a newspaper with a headline on Ford’s profits.

After the Ford workers shared their experiences, Jerry Tucker, a former regional director, reviewed the history of autoworker givebacks going back to 1980.

The discussion continued around the

Autoworker activists discuss challenging the bosses’ agenda

multiple issues facing auto workers. A key issue is “whipsawing” — the pitting of workers in one plant against another, dangling the carrot of new work in the plant to squeeze more concessions. This led to the topic of cross-border whipsawing.

Rather than blame Mexican and Canadian workers for the loss of their jobs, this group passed a resolution of solidarity for a sister in the Canadian Auto Workers union to bring back home.

Additional comments centered on the need to unite with the broader working-class community, to support immigrant workers, and for a labor movement that is anti-racist and anti-sexist. All the discussion tied in to the central issue of fighting to hold on to our jobs, wages and benefits.

The next immediate fight is at five GM plants that the company recently took back from Delphi, its former parts division that GM spun off in 1999. In 2007 workers at then-bankrupt Delphi agreed to major concessions, including pay cuts for nonskilled trade workers of over \$10 an hour.

Now GM is demanding the breakup of that master agreement, insisting that each of those five plants have its own separate agreement. Not surprisingly, the individual agreements GM is seeking all

contain further concessions, including pay cuts for skilled workers. GM workers won the right to be under one master agreement after the victory of the Flint sit-down strike in 1937.

This could have been a conference where workers merely blew off steam and went home. Instead, building on the success at Ford, they have already begun to resist GM’s latest attacks. The latest bulletin by Soldiers of Solidarity states:

“Workers have to make change happen by strikes, by Work to Rule, by organizing a gang and practicing “protected concerted activities.” Some of these practices make workers uncomfortable at first. Thanks to years of concessions we are rusty at fighting back. But the more you practice the better you get.

“It is the worker who creates the wealth on the job and controls production. If you want workplace justice and some dignity then MAKE THEM DO IT!

“When the wolf comes for your lunch, you don’t have to unwrap it for him, heat it up, put it in a clean bowl, and spoon feed him with a smile. If you feed the wolf (concessions) he will be back for more tomorrow and every day thereafter. Don’t feed the wolf!”

E-mail: mgrevatt@workers.org

FIGHT FOR JOBS Greedy bosses profit, unemployment expands,

Continued from page 1

Social Security if the bosses raise wages.

The idea that bribing businesses with tax breaks can revive the capitalist economy enough to absorb the 15 million unemployed, draw the millions of “discouraged workers” back into the workforce, and raise the hours of the millions of part-time workers is ludicrous. It would take the creation of 550,000 jobs each month for two years just to regain the 8 million jobs lost plus absorb the 2 million new workers coming into the workforce.

That would be like opening up dozens of auto plants, steel mills, computer factories, hospitals and department stores every month. But the present stage of capitalism is a stage of shrinking the economy, not growing it. Every significant industry is downsizing, whether auto, airlines, housing, department stores, etc.

Throwing tax breaks to small business as a solution to the jobs crisis is a very thin smokescreen to conceal the lack of any real government jobs program. It is like trying to bail out the ocean with a thimble.

As bad as things are now, capitalist economists are waiting with trepidation for the day when the original government stimulus package of \$787 billion runs out and the credit for first-time home buyers ends in the spring. Much of the stimulus money was in the form of tax breaks to business — and that has hardly put a dent in unemployment.

Growing dependence on capitalist state

As limited as it is, whatever upturn in the capitalist economy that has occurred is a result of government spending. This has revealed another fundamental feature of the new phase of U.S. capitalism: The economy has reached a new level of almost complete dependence on the intervention of the capitalist state. This is a

sign that capitalism as an economic system is approaching a dead end.

According to a study by the Economic Policy Institute: “[P]rivate sector sources of spending have not produced positive growth in gross domestic product on their own since 2007.

“The recession that began in 2008 saw the longest consecutive stretch of negative quarterly growth rates (four) since such data began being kept in 1947. The figure shows that without the public spending made under the Recovery Act last year and the Economic Stimulus Act of 2008, the U.S economy would have actually seen six straight quarters of contraction followed by another quarter of zero growth.” (“Private sources of spending cannot sustain job growth,” Josh Bivens, EPI)

In other words, the capitalists can no longer keep the system going on their own — even with the hundreds of billions of dollars that are annually pumped into the economy through funding the military machine and all the normal subsidies and supports given to business.

The bosses are becoming more and more superfluous as a force for economic growth and employment. At the present stage their direction is to shrink the economy — and thus destroy more and more jobs permanently — so that they can rake in greater profits.

Rather than make profits through the normal cycles of boom and bust, the bankers and bosses need the capitalist government to supply them with easy money in the form of guaranteeing them cheap credit or outright bailouts. Furthermore, they need the government to give car buyers and home buyers money to help buy cars and homes. The capitalists need the government to give them funds to bankroll construction projects, i.e., to guarantee them profits as a bribe to create jobs. The state has to extend unemployment insurance and food stamps to keep

the victims of layoffs and low wages from starving. This is the condition that the capitalists have brought about over time in their lust for profit.

‘We’re all temps now’

It is a law of their system that the capitalists must increase the productivity of labor, i.e., the rate of exploitation of labor. But now they have arrived at a point where they have increased the productivity of labor in “outrageous amounts” which are unsustainable, according to the former chair of the Federal Reserve System, Alan Greenspan. (Marketwatch, Oct. 4) The growth in productivity was 8.1 percent in the third quarter of last year and it is likely to have increased significantly since then.

Workers are forced to work harder, faster and more intensely, turning out more goods and services in less time, in order for there to be economic growth. But this increase in productivity brings growing unemployment at the same time. The capitalists boost their profits by sweating more out of the workers. This is what is behind the jobless recovery.

The bosses use growing job insecurity to sweat more profits out of a diminishing workforce. One key to this phenomenon is the growth of temporary and part-time work.

In 2005 more than a quarter of the workforce were temporary, part-time or freelance workers who could be hired and fired at will and lived in a permanent state of insecurity. Most of these workers received no health care insurance, no vacation, no retirement benefits, etc.

In a Jan. 7 cover story, Business Week magazine called them “disposable workers.” Their numbers have undoubtedly grown during the current crisis. “‘When I hear people talk about temp vs. permanent jobs, I laugh,’ says Barry Asin, chief analyst at the Los Altos (Calif.) labor-

analysis firm Staffing Industry Analysts. ‘The idea that any job is permanent has been well proven not to be true.’ As Kelly Services (KELYA) CEO Carl Camden puts it: ‘We’re all temps now.’”

The capitalists have used the crisis and all the insecurity it creates to bring down the living standards of the workers in every way possible. Yet these are the very workers who must buy their products.

“[T]his recession’s unusual ferocity,” wrote Business Week, “has accelerated trends — including offshoring, automation, the decline of labor unions’ influence, new management techniques, and regulatory changes — that already had been eroding workers’ economic standing. The forecast for the next five to 10 years: more of the same, with paltry pay gains, worsening working conditions, and little job security.”

The time to fight back is now

Business Week is a mouthpiece for big business. It behooves the advanced workers to be aware of this grim projection for the future of the working class and the oppressed from the mouths of the bosses themselves.

The underlying assumption of all these grim predictions is that the working class is going to sit back and take it on the chin without end. The workers and their communities, the students and youth, and all those who are exploited and oppressed by this vulture class must begin to organize for the fightback.

It is clear that the capitalists are just parasites on society. They cannot even keep their system going without the tax money of the workers being recycled from our wages into their pockets. The process of capitalist exploitation, with all its crises and all the boom-and-bust cycles that the workers have suffered through, had been able to recover up until now and put workers back to work. But those days

Struggle for reproductive justice continues

By Sue Davis

Abortion provider's murderer convicted

Anti-abortion zealot Scott Roeder was convicted in Wichita, Kan., on Jan. 29 of the cold-blooded murder of Dr. George R. Tiller, a fearless, caring physician who performed abortions for women in desperate circumstances, while enduring great personal risk and paying the ultimate sacrifice. Roeder testified that after he had stalked Dr. Tiller for months, Roeder walked into the church where Dr. Tiller served as an usher and shot him in the face at close range on May 31.

The jury took only 37 minutes to find Roeder guilty of first-degree murder with a sentence of life in prison. Some of the more rabid anti-abortion groups called the trial a “sham” because the judge did not allow the jury to consider a sentence of voluntary manslaughter, which the state of Kansas defines in part as “an unreasonable but honest belief that circumstances existed that justified deadly force.”

The pro-choice community unanimously praised the verdict, affirming that Roeder's conviction sent a powerful message to anti-abortion fanatics intent on killing abortion providers. Eight murders

and 17 attempted murders have occurred in the U.S. since 1993.

The National Organization for Women, whose members have been attacked and harassed while defending women's health clinics, volunteered to work with national agencies to identify anti-abortion terrorists who aid — and may someday emulate — hate-mongering, religious extremists like Roeder.

Unfortunately, calls by the pro-choice community for a thoroughgoing investigation of anti-abortion domestic terrorism have been ignored by both Republican and Democratic administrations. In fact, it's rarely if ever discussed in those terms by the corporate media, which never lose an opportunity to promote the so-called “war on terrorism” elsewhere in the world.

Super Bowl hypocrisy protested

What does an advertisement celebrating childbearing have to do with football? Nothing really — unless you want

to reach a guaranteed audience of 98 million during the Super Bowl. That's why Focus on the Family, a prominent evangelical organization whose purpose is to promote political change in line with its anti-abortion, anti-gay and pro-Israel values, has prepared a 30-second ad called “Celebrate Family, Celebrate Life,” which CBS agreed to air during the Super Bowl for \$2.5 million.

The ad features Tim Tebow, a well-known Heisman-Trophy-winning quarterback, and his missionary mom, Pam, who recounts how when she fell ill while pregnant with Tim in the Philippines, doctors told her to get an abortion but she “chose life” instead and had a strapping, talented football hero son.

While the pro-choice community has called on CBS to cancel the anti-abortion ad, several other factors have come to light. One is that feminist attorney Gloria Allred is questioning the truth of Pam Tebow's claims, noting that abortion has been illegal since 1930 in the Philippines,

where doctors found guilty of doing abortions can be sentenced to six years in jail. Besides denouncing the ad as biased propaganda, Allred wrote a letter to CBS detailing why the ad might violate federal law banning misleading advertising. (www.chattahbox.com, Jan. 30)

While CBS in the past turned down “advocacy” ads from MoveOn, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, and the United Church of Christ (showing lesbian, gay, trans, bi and queer people were welcome there), it claims to have recently changed its policy to include “reasonable” advocacy ads. But its blatant hypocrisy was revealed when it turned down a humorous ad by ManCrunch.com, a dating site for gay men, and an ad by GoDaddy, a domain name search site.

Which is it, CBS? You're “reasonable” enough to bank millions from anti-gay, anti-choice Focus on the Family, but not greedy enough to accept ad dollars from gay men? Or is all fair in TV advertising and capitalism? □

Protest supports Mexican electrical workers

Local labor union members and officers, along with members of the San Francisco Labor Council, the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement and community supporters, picketed and spoke outside the Mexican Consulate at noon-time Jan. 29 in downtown San Francisco.

Sponsored by the SFLC, LCLAA and International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10, the organizers took action to support the Mexican Electrical Workers union (SME) in its struggle against privatization, union busting and layoffs in the Mexican electrical industry. After forming a group representing the labor organizations present, the group went inside the Consulate to speak to Mexican officials there.

Since Oct. 10, more than 44,000 Mexi-

can electrical workers have been locked out of their jobs by the administration of Mexican President Felipe Calderon, who is attempting to privatize the public energy corporation, Luz y Fuerza del Centro, and destroy the SME in the process. Federal Preventive Police and the Mexican Army have occupied the power plants while untrained and inexperienced replacement workers — once called “scabs” — are trying to do the electrical workers' jobs. Some are getting accidentally killed in the process.

The SME needs all the support from the labor movement it can get, along with that from community and progressive political organizations and activists across California and the U.S.

— Report & photo by Joan Marquardt



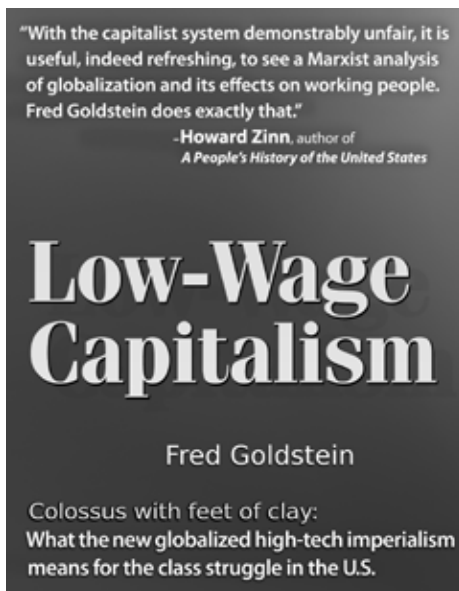
wages sink

have come to an end.

A capitalist recovery is only a recovery for the capitalists and not the workers. That is becoming clearer every day. A working class recovery will depend on the struggle of the working class — employed and unemployed, organized and unorganized, documented and undocumented immigrants, of every race and nationality. There is no other road to turn this crisis around.

It is time for the workers to open up a struggle against the capitalist state. It is time to demand an end to the subsidies to business, the bailout of the banks, the handing over of hundreds of billions of dollars to the military. Instead of funding capital, Washington must fund a massive jobs program.

Everyone who needs a job at livable wages must have one. Those who are unable to work must be guaranteed income. Youth must have jobs and education, not jails. Universal health care must be a right. There must be an end to foreclosures and evictions, to the persecution of immigrant workers, and an end to war and racism. □



Available at www.leftbooks.com

Excerpts from a plenary talk given by Kris Hamel from Detroit at the Nov. 14-15, 2009, Workers World Party national conference in New York.

A revolutionary Party utilizes all methods to try and win the hearts and minds of the working class and the oppressed, so that our class sisters and brothers become partisan fighters alongside us in the global class struggle against capitalist exploitation and imperialism.

There is one consistent weapon in our arsenal that wields the kind of power necessary to successfully wage a class war against the enemies of the workers and oppressed. It is a razor-sharp sword that has been with us for over 50 years now; it is Workers World newspaper.

At this time of great crisis and record unemployment, when so much makes so little sense to our class, Workers World newspaper is a powerful tool that we must get into the hands of the workers with ever-greater consistency and regularity. The pro-worker bias of Workers World paper is sorely needed by our class as an antidote to the lies and poison that the corporate-



Kris Hamel

PHOTO: PVN

owned media bombard us with constantly.

V.I. Lenin, the great revolutionary leader of the Bolshevik Party, once wrote, “The newspaper can and should be the ideological leader of the Party, evolving theoretical truths, tactical principles, general organizational ideas, and the general tasks of the whole

Party at any given moment.”

Isn't this what our newspaper is all about? It lays out working class, socialist ideology. That means we explain everything using the parameters of the global class struggle, with the working class and oppressed peoples on the one side and the capitalists, the imperialists and exploiters on the other. When you read Workers World there's no doubt which side we're on.

Our paper lays bare the contradictions and impossibilities of capitalism to solve the problems of the working class and oppressed and its inability to provide a decent quality life for all. It highlights the struggles of the working class here in the U.S. and internationally. It projects

the struggles that the Party is involved in and unifies us coast-to-coast in those struggles.

Workers World has been published since the Party's founding in 1959 and became a weekly newspaper in the fall of 1974. It's an amazing feat that our newspaper continues to be published on a weekly basis; 51 issues a year, at a time when other parties have only biweekly or monthly papers or have ceased publication altogether.

While Workers World's readership has expanded exponentially because of the worldwide Web, we recognize that fewer and fewer working people are able to afford a computer these days or to purchase Internet service.

Every single comrade needs to distribute our paper; to sell subscriptions; to be there at every picket line or progressive event with a bundle of Workers Worlds; to make it a priority to get out.

The paper needs more comrades and friends to submit articles. We need younger comrades and new comrades to write, to become editors, to come up with new ideas and new ways of doing things. We're excited that FIST comrades have started a quarterly newspaper called Left Hook. □

CARTER G. WOODSON & AFRICAN-AM

By **Abayomi Azikiwe**
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

February 2010 represents the 84th anniversary of the founding of Negro History Week, now known as African-American History Month. This month of commemoration was initiated by historian Dr. Carter G. Woodson, who worked tirelessly for many years to popularize the dissemination and study of the history of African people in the United States and throughout the world.

Woodson originally came from New Canton, Virginia, where he was born on Dec. 19, 1875. Born into a poor Southern family and having to work in the coal mines of Kentucky, he was unable to enroll in high school until he was 20 years old.

He later attended the University of Chicago and Harvard University, where he was awarded a Ph.D. in 1912, the second African American to receive this degree after W.E.B. DuBois in 1896.

W.E.B. DuBois, Carter G. Woodson and other African-American historians took on the challenge of refuting the racist propaganda disguised as history, which sought to provide the ideological justification for the mass enslavement of African people and the continuation of Jim Crow laws and racist terror.



W.E. DuBois

Before DuBois and Woodson

One of the major contributions of historians such as DuBois and Woodson is that they scientifically challenged and debunked the myths of the “Southern slave-owning aristocracy” and “Black docility.” These views could no longer stand up to the research presented in the narratives the African-American historians developed.

What is often deemphasized in the historical remembrance of African slavery in U.S. society is the high level of resistance by the captives to the plantations owners, overseers and the legal codes that reinforced this system of exploitation. Notions and theories of African slave resistance were largely absent from the scholarly treatment of this long episode in the history of North America until relatively recent times. One of the early 20th-century historians, Ulrich B. Phillips, did much to advance the racist views of Southern former-slave-owning families and their communities.

In Phillips’ book entitled “American Negro Slavery: A Survey of the Supply, Employment and Control of Negro Labor as Determined by the Plantation Regime,” published originally in 1918, he contends

that the overwhelming tendency among Southern slave holders was a liberalized form of administrative control, which resembles a patriarchal or paternalistic model of slave management.

As a result of the biased views held by Phillips and other white historians, their flawed emphasis and interpretation of data lead the reader to no particular insights or conclusions related to the African slave as a conscious human being within the production process taking place within Southern society as a whole.

All of the viewpoints presented by observers of the slave system in Phillips’ work reinforce the idea of the inferiority of African peoples and the supposed moral fortitude of the Southern slave owners. These views of the slave-master relationship contend that is is the natural order of things between Africans and Europeans.

The birth of African-American Studies

However, new schools of thought arose during the early 20th century to counteract the apologists for the antebellum slave system and the rebel confederacy during the Civil War. DuBois declared in 1909 that the cultural presence of the ancestral origins of the slaves played a significant role in shaping the character of American life: “The mystic spell of Africa is and

ever was over all America. It has guided her hardest work, inspired her finest literature, and sung her sweetest songs. Her greatest destiny — unsensed and despised though it be — is to give back to the first of continents the gifts which Africa of old gave to America’s fathers’ fathers.”

According to Jacqueline Goggin in her political biography, “Carter G. Woodson: A Life in Black History”: “In 1915 he founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History to encourage scholars to engage in the intensive study of the past as it related to Africans and their descendants through the world. Prior to this work, the field had been largely neglected or distorted in the hands of historians who accepted the traditionally biased picture of Blacks in American and world affairs.”

In 1916 Woodson founded the “Journal of Negro History,” which remained an important scholarly publication under his direction for more than 30 years. His academic work led him to Howard University and West Virginia State College as a professor and administrator.

Over the years he authored numerous important books, including “The Negro in Our History” (1922), “The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861” (1915) and “A Century of Negro Migration” (1918). In 1933, during the Great Depression,

African culture, resistance live in Haiti

The following is based on a talk given by G. Dunkel at a NYC Workers World forum on Jan. 29.

It is useful in understanding the current situation in Haiti to examine its roots — in particular why Haiti should be regarded as a country with an African culture and how U.S. and other imperialist interventions in Haiti met a stubborn and tenacious resistance.

African culture

Its successful and singular revolution, expelling French colonialism and ending slavery in 1804, meant Haiti kept its own institutions, which were and are African. Haiti also kept its own language, which is Creole, a melding of African structure and French vocabulary. Over half of Dessalines’ anti-slavery army had been born in Africa, and they needed a common language for their struggle.

One striking feature of the life of Haitian peasants is the institution of the konbit, a large group of peasants working collectively to complete a major project. Konbits, or coumbites, are a feature of Western African society.

Whether or not they approved of Vodoo, an African religion, or the civilization currently existing in Africa, Haitian intellectuals beginning in the 1820s had to recognize that Haiti was profoundly influenced by its roots in Africa.

You can see how much Haiti’s revolution threatened the U.S. slaveocracy with this fact: The first foreign aid the U.S. ever granted was \$700,000 to the slave owners in Haiti to put down the revolutionary uprising.

After 1804 Haiti had a peasantry with some access to weapons. These peasants were confronting big landlords, called grandons, and the merchants and traders, a nascent bourgeoisie, in the cities. The Haitian army, which had a revolutionary tradition, always wavered from side to side. One way to see the next 100 years is as a class struggle conducted with arms.



Jean-Jacques Dessalines

Foreigners were constitutionally forbidden to own land. The fear of reenslavement kept Haitians from traveling and establishing foreign trade.

Imperialist interventions and Haitian resistance

In return for recognition of Haiti’s independence, France demanded and got 150 million gold francs in 1825 to pay for the “loss of property” suffered by the French slave owners. Haiti had to pay for the freedom it won with its blood.

This extortion was a major burden on Haiti’s economy. Haiti had to borrow the money to pay France from private French, British and American banks, and didn’t finish paying all these loans off until 1947.

All four U.S. invasions — 1915-34, 1994, 2004 and 2010 — were justified with so-called humanitarian reasons and allegedly designed to promote “stability,” which is another name for U.S. interests.

The first U.S. invasion in 1915 disarmed the peasants and set up a new Haitian army to control and repress the population. Henceforth coups were to be organized by the army. Charlemagne Peralte and Benoit Betraville are two heroes who died leading the resistance to this invasion.

During the Great Depression, U.S.

military occupation of Haiti grew expensive and Haitian resistance was growing. So the U.S. troops left Haiti in 1934. That was the same year the Haitian Communist Party was founded.

After a lot of coups and finagling — which Haitians call magouillage — and the growth of populist movements, the Duvaliers (first father, then son) ruled from 1957 to 1986. A dechoukaj — uprooting — began when the people grew hungry in the provinces. Jean-Claude Duvalier with his household goods and hundreds of millions of dollars in foreign banks was flown out to the French Riviera on a U.S. jet.

It was under the Duvaliers that Haiti’s markets were opened up to foreign competition. This influx of foreign goods has basically destroyed Haiti’s subsistence agriculture.

After one election was drowned in blood, pressure grew for a free and fair one. Jean-Bertrand Aristide ran in 1990 and won with 67.5 percent of the vote against Marc Bazin, the U.S.-backed candidate, who had less than 15 percent.

After eight months as president, Aristide was overthrown. Four thousand people died in the streets demanding his return in demonstration after demonstration.

Aristide returned three years later along with another U.S. military occupa-

tion. At that time, he managed to declare the Haitian army disbanded before stepping down from the presidency.

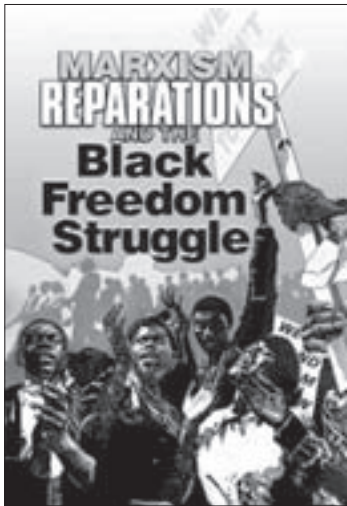
He ran again in 2000, and this time got 92 percent of the vote. Since there was no standing army in Haiti under U.S. control, it took three years to overthrow him. U.S. Special Forces bundled Aristide onto a U.S. Air Force jet and flew him to the Central African Republic.

After he was gone from Haiti, there was a joint U.S., Canadian and French invasion, followed by a United Nations occupation.

Over the past six years, thousands of Haitians have marched to demand Aristide’s return, even at the risk of their lives. His political party Fanmi Lavalas is still the majority party in Haiti. The only reason it doesn’t win in elections is that the government keeps it off the ballot.

Following the earthquake, Aristide offered to return to help his people through this catastrophe, Haiti’s Hurricane Katrina. But the 13,000 U.S. troops who have effective control of Haiti will undoubtedly use force to keep him out, as the U.S. has shown it will tolerate no really popular government there.

If Haiti’s resistance to the occupation succeeds, U.S. imperialism will have greater problems maintaining its influence in the Caribbean and South America. □



MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

An anthology of writings from Workers World newspaper. Edited by Monica Moorehead. Includes:

Racism, National Oppression & Self-Determination

Larry Holmes

Black Labor from Chattel Slavery to Wage Slavery

Sam Marcy

Black Youth: Repression & Resistance LeiLani Dowell

The Struggle for Socialism Is Key Monica Moorehead

Black & Brown Unity: A Pillar of Struggle for Human Rights and Global Justice! Saladin Muhammad

AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH

he published his best known work, “The Mis-Education of the Negro,” where he attacked the white capitalist influence over schooling designed for African Americans during the early 20th century.

In this book there is a chapter entitled “Political Education Neglected,” where Woodson writes: “Even the few Negroes who are elected to office are often similarly uninformed and show a lack of vision. They have given little attention to the weighty problems of the nation; and in the legislative bodies to which they are elected, they restrict themselves as a rule to matters of special concern to the Negroes themselves, such as lynching, segregation and disenfranchisement, which they have well learned by experience.”

Woodson then goes on to point out that the contributions of African-American elected officials during Reconstruction were broader: “This indicates a step backwards, for the Negroes who sat in Congress and in the State Legislatures during the Reconstruction worked for the enactment of measures of concern to all elements of the population regardless of color. Historians have not yet forgotten what those Negroes statesmen did in advocating public education, internal improvements, labor arbitration, the tariff, and the merchant marine.”

Woodson's legacy and the African-American struggle

Woodson died in 1950 at the age of 75. He did not live to see the emergence of the mass civil rights and Black power struggles starting in the mid-1950s and extending through the early 1970s. He was unable to witness the emergence of a militant student movement in 1960 that led to the formation of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee and the later Black Panther Party.

It was during these times that the movement demanding the implementation of African-American Studies programs in K-12 education and in institutions of higher learning emerged. Tremendous protests were carried out at numerous schools, colleges and universities that won concessions introducing course work that recognized the contributions and essential role of African Americans in U.S. and world affairs.

The work of Woodson, DuBois and other African-American scholars provided the intellectual basis for the advancement of ethnic and multicultural studies. Every major school district and institution of higher learning has seen intense debate and struggle over the character of the academic curriculum and the admission and status of African Americans and other op-

pressed people of color in the United States.

Despite these gains of the adoption of African-American and multicultural studies programs and curriculums, as well as admission of people of color to historically white institutions, the current economic crisis has witnessed the wholesale attack on such gains made during the civil rights and Black power era. Today school districts and colleges are cutting back and laying off educational workers who gained their positions as a result of the mass movements over the last five decades.

These attacks on higher education and their disproportionate impact on African Americans and other oppressed people must be taken up in the current student movement against the major downsizing taking place in all areas of education in the U.S. With the upcoming March 4 National Day of Action to Defend Education, students and educational workers must demand the continuation, restoration and full funding of all academic programs that serve the oppressed



CARTER G. WOODSON

and exploited groups who have traditionally been excluded from positions of power and influence in the country.

These major cutbacks in education funding must be rejected, and students and workers should demand that money be taken away from the banks and the Pentagon and given to the people to ensure quality education for all. The interests of youth and workers must supersede those of the corporations and the military. □

Haitian community launches campaign for teen's return

By Jonathan Regis and Frank Neisser
Boston

Boston's Haitian community and its supporters have begun a campaign to allow Boston teenager Jenny Ulysse to return home from Haiti and for the right of all U.S. permanent residents to return to their homes. They are also calling for medical treatment or evacuation for all in need of critical medical attention.

Jenny Ulysse is a young community organizer who received a commendation plaque from Boston City Councilor Chuck Turner for her dedication as an intern in his district office. She is the main breadwinner for her household, which includes her mother and brother.

Ulysse is currently employed by the Union of Minority Neighborhoods organizing for their campaign for Juvenile CORI (criminal records access) reform and is also an activist with the Bail Out the People Movement.

Ulysse has faced challenges growing up in Boston. Through the support of members of her community she is now enrolled at the Adult Technical Academy and confidently envisions a future as a college graduate and professional writer and poet.

On Jan. 12 Ulysse and her twin brother Jerry were in Haiti visiting their stepmother and numerous siblings. When the earthquake hit, Ulysse, her beloved stepmother, Yolanda, and friends were in the family hair salon in Port-au-Prince. Immediately a nearby five-story building collapsed on the salon. Ulysse was miraculously recovered from the rubble, sustaining a leg injury, cuts and bruises. Her stepmother sustained mortal injuries and died.

In the wake of the disastrous earthquake, Jenny, Jerry and Valentine, their oldest sibling in Haiti, have been burdened with the responsibility of caring for 18 members of their family, including a 10-month-old baby and an elderly grandmother. Their situation is not unlike that of many of their fellow countrymen and women who have lost family, friends and the little they had to this natural disaster. Having survived the earthquake, the next step is seeking humanitarian aid and medical assistance.

Over 2 million people in Haiti are in need of food, water and/or medical assistance, but thus far assistance has only reached 500,000. While 12,000 nurses from the National Nurses United union

have volunteered for service in Haiti, instead 12,000 soldiers have been sent. The U.S. response has been a military occupation and a blatantly racist naval blockade of 25 ships surrounding Haiti to make sure desperate Haitians do not make it to U.S. shores. U.S. military control of the Port-Au-Prince airport has prevented medical aid and volunteers from reaching Haiti, creating a two-way blockade, while filling the country with U.S. troops.

Medical assistance must be gotten to all who need it or they should be allowed to obtain it in the U.S. To date Ulysse's injured and swollen foot has received no medical attention or been X-rayed. She has been to the U.S. Embassy three times in an effort to return home to her family in Boston and to get the medical care she needs.

Although her documentation was lost in the rubble of the earthquake, Ulysse knows her green card number and her social security number. United Minority Neighborhoods and the office of Boston City Councilor Ayanna Pressley prevailed on John Kerry's office to fax her documents to the U.S. Embassy in Port-au-Prince. Yet she was sent away because she was not a U.S. citizen, even though she is a legal resident with the right to be in the U.S.

Boston



Jenny Ulysse

Boston activists and the International Action Center have launched a campaign demanding that Ulysse and all legal U.S. residents in Haiti be allowed back to the U.S. immediately. There is an online petition at www.iacenter.org/haiti/jennyreturn. There are plans for a Boston City Council resolution seeking Ulysse's return, as well as a planned campaign in support of Ulysse in the Boston public schools.

Labor unions, including United Steelworkers Local 8751, Boston School Bus Drivers, and community groups, including the Bail Out the People Movement, are getting behind the campaign.

Reached in Haiti by Workers World, Ulysse said, “I wish to express my thanks to all of those who are supporting me and my right to return home. I could easily have been killed by the heavy beams that fell on me. Everyone must unite to get the aid to the people who need it and to see that everyone is able to return home to the United States regardless of citizenship status.”

Jonathan Regis is a Haitian-American leader in Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST) in Boston.

Alabama's Black Belt: Legacy of slavery, sharecropping and segregation Consuela Lee

Harriet Tubman, Woman Warrior Mumia Abu-Jamal

Are Conditions Ripe Again Today? 40th Anniversary of the 1965 Watts Rebellion John Parker

Racism and Poverty in the Delta Larry Hales

Haiti Needs reparations, not sanctions Pat Chin

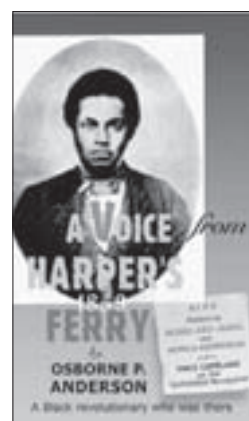


CONSUELA LEE 1926-2009

A Voice from Harper's Ferry. 1859

By Osborne P. Anderson, a Black freedom fighter Prefaces by Mumia Abu-Jamal, Monica Moorehead and Vince Copeland on the 'Unfinished Revolution.'

A unique book from the raid on Harper's Ferry by Osborne P. Anderson, the only Black combatant to survive the raid. His account of this turning point in the struggle against slavery—an armed attack by Black and white volunteers on a citadel of the South—refutes those who try to minimize the role of African American people in fighting for their freedom.



Both books available at leftbooks.com.
Reparations is in bookstores around the country

Help the people of Haiti reject military occupation

Excerpts from a Jan. 24 statement by Prof. Jose Maria Sison, chairperson, International League of Peoples' Struggle, concerning Haiti. Full statement at workers.org.

On Jan. 12, a magnitude 7 earthquake shook the Caribbean nation of Haiti, its epicenter hitting west of the capital Port-au-Prince. The quake and its numerous aftershocks have wrought death and injury to a huge number of people and catastrophic damage to their homes and other vital infrastructures.

The people of Haiti are undergoing incalculably great suffering. We, the International League of Peoples' Struggle, convey our deepest sympathies to the Haitian people for their loss and express our most heartfelt recognition of their plight. We join the people of the world in lending our wholehearted support to help ease their suffering and call on our member organizations and allies to extend immediate rescue and relief support to the victims in Haiti.

In the face of the devastation, the people of Haiti have had to rely on themselves and have shown heroism in helping each other as they go through the rubble, digging with their hands and puny tools to pull out what they can of the victims, both survivors and dead.

We salute the Haitian people for helping each other. We also praise the various private organizations and institutions that have been able to extend whatever help on an international scale. At the same time, we direct our strongest denunciation against the U.S. government for deploying military forces in Haiti instead of the personnel of U.S. civilian agencies who are trained and equipped for rescue and relief aid.

The U.S. government's first prolonged reaction to the earthquake was to send in the U.S. Marines and the Army's 82nd Airborne Division. This is the notorious force unit that had invaded Vietnam, [Haiti's] neighboring Dominican Republic in 1965, Grenada in 1984, Haiti in

1994 and Afghanistan.

More than ever, the earthquake disaster in Haiti exposes the social vulnerability and devastation caused by two centuries of colonial slavery, debt bondage and modern imperialism. The capability of the people of Haiti to surmount the dire results of such a natural disaster has been undermined and debilitated by man-made disasters, inflicted by foreign debt, U.S. military interventions and occupation, and U.S.-imposed "free market" policies.

Haiti is currently occupied by U.N. troops and controlled by a puppet government installed after the U.S. military kidnapped democratically elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 2004. Decades of "structural adjustment" programs, under the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, have robbed the nation of the capacity to provide social services, produce enough food from the land and develop national industries.

It is utterly absurd and perverse for the U.S. to invoke security as pretext for landing its military forces on a country that has long been laid prostrate by imperialist plunder and that had just been devastated by the earthquake. Natural disasters have become one of the major pretexts for U.S. military intervention and occupation in various parts of the world.

Long-term rehabilitation of Haiti must eventually be mapped out together with the Haitian people, in conjunction with respect for their national sovereignty and self-government.

The ILPS reiterates its call for the withdrawal of all U.S. and other foreign military forces. We call on the U.S. American people to demand an end to U.S. military occupation and intervention in Haiti and help reverse the course of U.S.-Haiti relations. We can best help Haiti recover from the devastation of the Jan. 12 earthquake by supporting the Haitian people's struggle for national self-determination against foreign military occupation and economic plunder. □

'Gauze not guns' demanded for Haiti



More than 200 people gathered in Brooklyn at the call of Kowalisyon pou Kore Ayiti (The Coalition to Stand With Haiti) on Jan. 29 in bitter cold to hear a series of speeches denouncing the current U.S. occupation of Haiti, urging "gauze in place of guns" and expressing firm solidarity with the Haitian people in this time of great need.

Some of the speakers were: Ramsey Clark, the former U.S. Attorney General; Jocelyne Gay, of the Haitian Committee to Support the Struggle in Haiti (KAKOLA); Father Luis Barrios, St. Mary's Church; Larry Holmes, International Action Center; Berthony Dupont, International Support Haiti Network; and Pierre Florestal,



Larry Holmes, top left, Monica Moorehead, left and Ramsey Clark above.

Fanmi Lavalas party, N.Y. Chapter.

After about an hour of speeches, demonstrators marched across the Brooklyn Bridge to another rally at Foley Square, near the Federal Building, where additional protesters had gathered.

Similar demonstrations took place in other cities in the U.S., including San Francisco, Baltimore, Philadelphia and Detroit, as well as internationally.

— Report and photos by G. Dunkel



WWW PHOTO: JOAN MARQUART

Racist, anti-poor insults aim to split working class

By Caleb T. Maupin

South Carolina Lt. Gov. Andre Bauer recently made outrageously racist and anti-poor remarks at a town hall meeting of his Republican supporters.

In a statement reminiscent of the Jim-Crow-era South, Bauer equated government school lunch subsidies for poor children with "feeding stray animals." The reason he gave was "Because they breed. You're facilitating the problem if you give an animal or a person ample food supply," and so, "you've got to curtail that type of behavior." (McClatchy Newspapers, Jan. 23)

Bauer made these highly offensive remarks while making the case for abolishing school lunch programs. At this time of worsening economic crisis, these programs are depended on more than ever by millions of low-income children across the country.

His words show utter contempt for poor people, as South Carolina's jobless rate has risen to 12.6 percent. (bls.gov)

Bauer's remarks were also an appeal to his Republican base in order to try to win support for his gubernatorial campaign on the most bigoted and reactionary basis.

Bauer is a wealthy, privileged individual. In 2006, he suffered a minor injury when the small plane he owned and piloted crashed. Later that year, he was not even issued a warning citation after being caught driving more than 100 mph in his state-issued car. He told the police officer who pulled him over that he might have a gun. Still, no arrest. (wistv.com, March 28, 2006)

Bauer's remarks exemplify a common pattern of racist, right-wing rhetoric. In the 1980s, former President Ronald Reagan falsely alleged that "Cadillac welfare mothers" lived in luxury at the taxpayers' expense.

Such lies paved the way for ex-President Bill Clinton's 1996 so-called "welfare reform" act, which shattered countless families and cast many into extreme financial insecurity, many of whom have never recovered.

The racist term "Cadillac welfare mothers" was used by right-wing politicians and demagogues to whip up attacks against poor and oppressed women and single mothers. Those living in poverty in the United States, including those who receive public assistance, barely have

enough food or livable housing or any other of life's necessities. None has lived anywhere near a life of luxury.

By making these remarks, Bauer aimed to divide white workers from members of oppressed communities, and to exacerbate racism on the part of whites to try to prevent class unity from developing during this economic crisis.

Southern capitalists and their representatives have used this strategy for decades; they have resorted to fomenting racist divisions to divide poor and working people.

As Sam Marcy pointed out in his book, "The Klan and Government: Foes or Allies?" the Ku Klux Klan functioned as a state-sponsored organization which was used to whip up impoverished white workers against African-American people, and whose purpose was also to commit acts of racist terror and violence against oppressed people and their allies.

The last thing that Lt. Gov. Bauer and his allies of capitalist-class bankers and corporation owners want is for workers and oppressed people to join forces and fight against the rich and powerful.

If Bauer knows the history of his state,

he can recall that during the Great Depression, under the leadership of communists in the Trade Union Unity League, the National Textile Workers Union was formed and built Black and white unity.

In 1934, when 400,000 textile workers, African-American and white, went on strike nationwide demanding a better life for all, the majority of textile workers in South Carolina joined in.

Ibra C. Blackwood, then the governor of South Carolina, moved to repress the strike. He called on "all good citizens" to join with the National Guard and attack the strikers under orders to "shoot to kill." Six strikers were shot dead, following orders from the governor on behalf of the capitalist class.

Bauer and the members of his class know that as conditions worsen for working people, misery and, along with it, hatred will grow for the capitalist system. They know this will inevitably translate to a will to fight back.

When workers and oppressed peoples unite in struggle, they are a strong force, strong enough to win victories. The capitalists know and fear this. □

U.N. OKs illegal U.S. takeover of Haiti

By G. Dunkel

The 20 U.S. Navy and Coast Guard ships, 63 helicopters, 204 joint operations vehicles and approximately 13,000 military personnel — 10,000 afloat and 3,000 ashore — occupying Haiti, were sanctioned by the U.N. as of Jan. 22. No request from Haiti was needed — the U.S. wanted to send troops and it did. The occupation and the U.N. approval have no legal basis.

These U.S. Marines, Airborne troops and sailors have little to no training in humanitarian missions. Their basic job is to kill or disable the Pentagon’s enemies on the battlefield.

Haitian President René Préval criticized a lack of coordination among countries bringing aid to the Caribbean nation. The Haitian government, a creation of a U.S.-sponsored kidnapping in 2004 that ousted the elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, is itself unable to coordinate the aid effort.

The U.S. claims that it has committed to spending \$317 million on aid to Haiti, but of each U.S. taxpayer dollar being used for “aid,” 40 cents is going to the U.S.

military. Another 36 cents funds the U.S. Agency for International Development’s disaster assistance — which includes items ranging from \$5,000 generators to \$35 hygiene kits with soap, toothbrushes and toothpaste for a family of five, according to a Jan. 27 AP report. Only 1 cent on a dollar goes to the Haitian government.

The insensitive and cruel conduct of the U.S. government can be seen in how it decided to stop emergency medical evacuations from Haiti to Florida. A New York Times article reported that Florida Gov. Charlie Crist complained about the cost to the state. Crist denied that charge, but says he would like Florida to get some aid from the federal government or from other states.

Only after five days of criticism and pressure did the White House order medical evacuations to restart. During that period the whole world could see that U.S. policies were causing the needless deaths of Haitians.

Reports are sketchy, but it appears that most of the million or so homeless in the Port-au-Prince area are getting some water. Food is another story. Distribution has been spotty. There are media reports

that people have said they are not eating. Food is available in the markets, and the banks have been opened to allow people to access their accounts and money their relatives abroad have sent.

Some of the towns outside of Port-au-Prince say they haven’t gotten food, water or help with shelter in the two weeks since the earthquake. Others have finally started to get food and water. (Associated Press, Jan. 28)

The U.S. commander running the show, Lt. Gen. Ken Keen, claims that food is “flooding” into the city. (AP, Jan. 27) However, the U.S. is sending it any which way — it won’t guarantee that any location gets regular rations.

The big aid organizations have divided Port-au-Prince into 16 areas and each has taken the responsibility for one area.

The U.N. World Food Program says it has reached 450,000 people and urgently appealed to governments for more cash. This figure means that there are likely tens of thousands of people that the WFP hasn’t reached.

The number of people living in Port-au-Prince now, three weeks after the earthquake struck, is hard to estimate. There

are no accurate reports on how many people have still received no aid, since between 100,000 and 200,000 people died in the earthquake. Tens of thousands of people who had family or friendship ties elsewhere have used government-subsidized buses and boats to leave the capital. Some analysts believe that a deliberate plan to depopulate Port-au-Prince is afoot.

It is not surprising that Port-au-Prince is having so much trouble recovering. According to Alex Dupuy, a sociologist and author of several books on social, political and economic developments in Haiti: “With a population of more than two million in a city whose infrastructure could at best sustain a population of 100,000, the local and national public administrations simply abandoned the city to itself. Neither provided meaningful services of any kind — schools, health care, electricity, potable water, sanitation, zoning and construction regulations.” (www.tanbou.com). Anything that the administration did served the interests of the few rich Haitians and foreigners in the city, most of whom survived the quake relatively unscathed. □

Expanding the war to Yemen

The Pentagon’s war on terror — does it make people in the U.S. safer?

By Joyce Chediak

Some 2,752 people were killed on Sept. 11, 2001, in the airplane attacks in the U.S. Their deaths have been marked and mourned. Today just the words “World Trade Center,” “9/11” and “al-Qaida” bring to mind attacks on civilians and fear of other such attacks.

Washington has recently invoked these civilian deaths and a need to “protect American lives” to justify drone and cruise missile attacks in Yemen. A closer look, however, reveals that the U.S. government is using the 9/11 deaths as a pretext to kill civilians abroad. Pentagon attacks in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and now Yemen have killed tens of thousands of civilians.

In Afghanistan, Pakistan and Yemen, U.S. drones target homes and neighborhoods. Every time the Pentagon or its clients announce that drone-launched cruise missiles killed a “terrorist leader,” the cruise missiles likely killed the entire family, any visiting relatives and any close neighbors of the alleged leader.

Is the U.S. really hitting “al-Qaida operatives”?

Neither the Obama administration nor the Pentagon expresses sympathy for these civilian deaths. In the name of eliminating “al-Qaida operatives,” the Pentagon is attacking whole communities.

The U.S. media report that 30 Afghan civilians were killed the week of Jan. 11 alone. In both Afghanistan and Pakistan, cruise missiles have annihilated wedding parties. In 2009, the civilian toll in Afghanistan was the highest since the U.S. occupied that country in 2001.

Investigative journalist Allan Nairn, interviewed Jan. 6 on WBAI Radio’s “Democracy Now!” explained that the U.S. had implemented the “El Salvador Option” in Iraq. This meant copying the death squads Washington set up in Cen-

tral America in the 1980s under Gen. Stanley McCrystal’s direction. This killing of local leaders is flippantly called “man hunting,” said Nairn.

The bombing of the CIA office in Khost, Afghanistan, on Dec. 30 revealed that the CIA there was involved in assassinating local leaders. Gen. McCrystal now runs the Afghanistan war.

On Dec. 27, U.S. forces in Afghanistan’s Ghazi Khan Village dragged from their beds, handcuffed, then executed eight people they called “terrorists,” who turned out to be school children between the ages of 11 and 17. Their schoolmaster confirmed the youths’ identities and ages.

Mass outrage over the massacre sparked protests, including one of school children in Kabul demanding that the U.S. get out. The Afghans charged the international occupation forces with valuing Afghan lives less than the lives of the occupation troops.

In Yemen, a Dec. 17 attack which the pro-U.S. government claimed “killed 34 al-Qaida militants and foiled a terror plot,” really killed at least 49 civilians, including 23 children and 17 women, according to local officials. The regime also attacked a meeting planning a protest against the massacre. (Counterpunch, Jan. 15-17)

After the Dec. 30 bombing of the CIA office in Afghanistan, the Pentagon drastically increased drone attacks on villages in Pakistan, surely killing more families and hitting more wedding parties.

Killing civilians, it seems, was part of the Pentagon’s plan right from the beginning. According to Nairn, a feasibility study done by the Pentagon before the 2003 invasion of Iraq showed that of the 22 attacks planned the first day, approximately 30 civilians would be killed in each attack. The study referred to the civilian deaths as “bug splat.” This study was presented to Gen. Tommy Franks, who said to go ahead, do them all.



Some 660 civilian deaths were anticipated in the first day of the Iraq war alone. This “bug splat” was a quarter of the 9/11 casualties, on the war’s first day.

Occupation leads to suicide bombings

How would you feel if your family was murdered, their deaths treated as bug splat? What would you do? Wouldn’t you be angry?

Washington and the Pentagon know full well that their wars will fuel resistance. They have heard it from their own think tanks and academics. Robert Pates of the University of Chicago, a leading bourgeois expert on suicide bombings and a political conservative, called suicide bombings “a consequence of occupation.”

The Rand Corporation, a major ruling-class think tank, said in a 2008 report, “U.S. policymakers should end the use of the phrase ‘war on terrorism’ since there is no battlefield solution to defeating al-Qaida.”

If there is no “battlefield solution” to terrorism, who gains from the \$1.05 trillion spent so far on the Iraq and Afghanistan wars? Who benefits from the \$700 billion slated this year for the military, with \$75 billion specifically earmarked for “the war on terrorism”?

These U.S. wars are not about protecting people in the U.S. They are about getting new sources of profits for the oil

companies and Wall Street corporations. U.S. oil companies want Iraqi oil, the huge untapped reserves in Yemen, and to run a pipeline through strategic Afghanistan from the vast oil wealth in the former Soviet Asian republics.

Meanwhile, the mercenary company Blackwell, along with Bechtel, Halliburton and General Electric, to name a few, have reaped billions of dollars in profits from contracts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

More than 5,000 U.S. troops, sons and daughters of the working class, have died in Iraq and Afghanistan securing profits and strategic advantage for the corporations. Are they “bug splat” too?

Do Pentagon actions make workers safer at home?

Tens of millions of people in the U.S. are consumed with fear — fear of home foreclosures, of long-term unemployment and dwindling opportunities for themselves and their children. People are afraid to get sick because they have no health insurance, or the insurance they pay for might not cover their illness or medications.

The banks finance the Pentagon’s military adventures abroad, and get their cut from corporate war profiteers. The banks gambled on real estate and left millions of working-class households in ruin. Now that the government has bailed them out, the same banks refuse to let workers renegotiate their mortgages, while they give themselves big fat bonuses.

The jobs, homes, savings, health care and retirement funds that have been lost were not taken away by Osama Bin Laden, the Taliban, al-Qaida in Yemen, or by Iran, Syria, Hamas or Hezbollah. They are not our enemy.

The greed of these banks and corporations has caused many, many times more death and misery than any so-called threat from al-Qaida. □

Buying elections

A 5-4 U.S. Supreme Court decision on Jan. 21 removed restrictions on corporate funding for campaign advertisements in federal elections, handing the capitalists an unrestricted right to buy elections. The ruling was in defense of “free speech” for capitalists like Exxon-Mobil, AT&T, Goldman Sachs, Citigroup and all the insurance, pharmaceutical, mega-medical, military/aerospace, communications and other industries whose views thoroughly dominate the media.

While opening the floodgates for corporate propaganda and big-business-sponsored political candidates, the Supreme Court also ruled that union spending on electoral campaigns is unrestricted too. Some equality! According to opensecrets.org, pro-business individual and Political Action Committee contributions to the 2007/08 candidates outstripped union PAC money 15-to-1. That figure omits money for ads on specific issues and other spending.

The gap between vast corporate spending and union contributions should come as no surprise, considering how capitalist bosses pile up unmatched cash by exploiting the labor of both organized and unorganized workers in the U.S. and worldwide. The Supreme Court tilted an already uneven electoral playing field even more.

The labor movement has a right to advocate workers’ issues, inside and outside the electoral arena — and we look forward to its own independent candidates, too. Record labor spending helped to gain the historic election of the first African-American president as well as overwhelming Democratic majorities in both houses of Congress. But these electoral successes have done nothing to strengthen labor’s position.

The Employee Free Choice Act was stripped of the vital card-check provision and is gathering dust in Congress. The health care reform initiative conceded from the beginning any possibility of passing a single-payer plan, that is, Medicare for all. It later conceded on establishing a government-run insurance plan to compete with the insurance companies; in effect, if it passes at all, it will be a subsidy for the insurance companies and the health industry. No real jobs program has been passed. The wars and occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan continue. The agenda of big business continues to rule the day.

The Supreme Court decision further hinders any semblance of “democracy” in the United States. Will candidates other than Republicans or Democrats receive unrestricted funds? What kind of opportunity will progressives, independents or working-class candidates have to spread their message? Even getting on the ballot is already a prohibitive and costly endeavor for candidates who represent the workers and oppressed.

The labor movement anthem “Solidarity Forever” reminds us that in workers’ hands is placed a power greater than corporate-hoarded gold. By using labor’s large but limited resources to mobilize the rainbow working class — including documented and undocumented immigrant workers; the unemployed and underemployed; youth; and communities threatened with foreclosures, evictions and utility shutoffs — to fight in its own name, the corporate-bought campaign ads and lobbying stranglehold can be broken and the capitalist class will lose its dominion not just over Congress and the elections, but over the working class as well. □

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Sen. Scott Brown in pocket of rightists, bankers

By Fred Goldstein

The Democratic Party suffered a severe political setback in Massachusetts with the loss of the U.S. Senate seat, held by Ted Kennedy for almost 50 years, to Scott Brown. A stealth right-wing politician, Brown rode around the state in a pickup truck claiming to be an independent and “man of the people.”

Right now Brown is playing things soft and cagey, not wanting to sound like a right-wing ideologue. He distanced himself from the Tea Party movement on Barbara Walters’ ABC-TV show on Jan 31.

But whatever Brown’s politics turn out to be in Washington, in Massachusetts he was supported by a combination of right-wing groups and big banks and financial institutions. Brown climbed to victory on their funding and on the confusion and disillusionment of the population over the failure of the Obama administration to come to their aid in a time of economic crisis.

The combined efforts of such right-wing organizations as FreedomWorks (an umbrella group for the Tea Party amalgam of racist riffraff), the American Liberty Alliance and Redstate.com helped secure his victory. (nytimes.com, Jan. 21)

These groups were the organizers of the “town hall” meetings and Tax Day protests in which a conglomeration of various right-wing forces poured out racist slurs, anti-communist slogans and anti-immigrant agitation directed against President Barack Obama. Tea Party forces were on the ground in Massachusetts and funds flowed into Brown’s campaign over the Internet from their networks.

As for being a man of the people, in reality Brown was more like a man of the banking elite. He received close to \$450,000 from the financial industry in the last week of the campaign, according to the Boston Globe online. (boston.com, Feb. 1)

In the Massachusetts race, Brown received about \$442,000 from Jan. 11-16, while Martha Coakley, his Democratic opponent, got \$92,000 from financial industry workers during the same period.

“Nearly 80 percent of the money Brown got from financial workers came from outside of Massachusetts, in places with a concentration of financial firms, such as New York City, Greenwich, Conn., Chicago, and San Francisco. In addition to financial giants such as Credit Suisse, Goldman Sachs, and Morgan Stanley, the

donors included executives from hedge funds and private equity firms.”

Workers should take careful note of the fact that in the Massachusetts election there was a convergence of interests and efforts between the extreme right wing and a section of big business that ranks high up in the ruling class.

It was the health care industry, particularly the insurance companies, that funneled money into FreedomWorks and the town hall attacks on Obama. And it was the oil companies, coal companies, utilities and other sections of big business that used FreedomWorks and its town hall model to organize so-called “grassroots” meetings around the country to agitate for legislation that would prevent the Obama administration from agreeing to reduce carbon emissions at the world meeting on climate change in Copenhagen.

In those cases, industries funneled money directly to the ultraright. In Massachusetts, the bankers and hedge funds gave directly to Brown. It is an example of an objective collaboration in which the right wing comes out stronger.

These reactionary forces were able to triumph because there was no alternative for the population other than the bankrupt program of the Obama administration. Under the Democratic Party leadership, Washington has shoveled money at the bankers, let them take huge bonuses and profits, made backroom deals with insurance and pharmaceutical companies, escalated the war in Afghanistan and failed to come up with any serious program to create jobs.

Coakley, who failed to campaign in the oppressed communities of Boston, was no alternative. She campaigned on the Obama program and represented the imperialist, pro-capitalist interests of the ruling class, just as Ted Kennedy had for two generations.

This is a clear message that organizations struggling to mitigate the different parts of the crisis facing the workers and oppressed — demanding jobs; fighting foreclosures; for food, education, health care; stopping the war, the death penalty and police brutality — must come together and give a genuine alternative. Only by building unity in struggle and putting forth a working-class, anti-capitalist political program can the right wing be beaten back and the economic crisis dealt with at the same time. □

TIBET and the CIA’s anti-China crusade

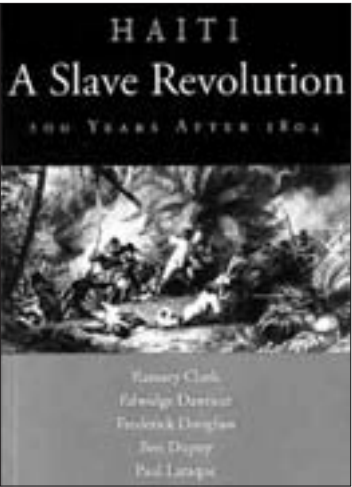
- Has Tibet become the front line of a new national liberation struggle? Or is something else happening there?
- Why weren’t the Dalai Lama’s slaves freed until 1959?
- Why was one of Hitler’s top Nazis part of the Dalai Lama’s inner circle?
- Why did the CIA create a Tibetan contra force beginning in the 1950s?
- What are the Dalai Lama’s connections to the CIA?

How are the Tibetan poor affected by the Chinese Revolution?

What about the ruling class Tibetans who went abroad?

This collection of articles from Workers World newspaper takes you beyond the anti-China hype about Tibet.

Available at Leftbooks.com



“Haiti: A Slave Revolution, 200 Years after 1804” was published in 2004 as a joint project of the International Action Center and the Haiti Support Network. It is not a traditional history book or textbook, but a people’s history. In the preface the editors state, “This book is going to combat 200 years of racist indoctrination and propaganda about the Haitian Revolution. It is essential to challenge these stereotypes in order to build true, informed solidarity with Haiti. Currently out of print, “Haiti: A Slave Revolution” can be read online at www.iacenter.org/haiti.

BANGLADESH

Convention offers revolutionary view of underdevelopment

By Sara Flounders
Dhaka, Bangladesh

More than 10,000 people gathered under a sea of red flags to open the First Convention of the Socialist Party of Bangladesh, and then held a militant mass march through Dhaka's crowded streets. Hundreds of nationally elected delegates and many thousands of participants attended the Dec. 30-31 Convention of the SPB, which was formed in 1980. They presented a powerful challenge to the Western corporate media's view of Bangladesh.

Almost the only things we ever hear in connection with Bangladesh are that it is hopelessly poor, densely populated and underdeveloped. But whenever revolutionary forces are organizing in the thousands and tens of thousands with anti-imperialist fervor and a clearly focused Marxist perspective of their own problems, they make a contribution to the understanding of the world movement. This can combat corporate media misinformation and imperialist stereotypes.

PART 1

The Socialist Party of Bangladesh has 40,000 announced members nationally. The party has also helped to develop a number of mass organizations such as a Socialist Workers Front, a Socialist Agricultural and Peasant Front, a Socialist Women's Forum, a Progressive Teachers Forum and a very large and active Socialist Student Front. These organizations involve tens of thousands of additional activists.

The Socialist Student Front has announced a major event in mid-March to celebrate the 25th anniversary of its founding. Tens of thousands of students from all the universities and many high schools are expected to attend. It is waging a giant campaign to protest cuts and deterioration of education.

In a country with 60 percent illiteracy, with millions of landless peasants and millions of workers surviving in the most desperate slums, many of the students come from a more privileged background. Students in Bangladesh have a revolutionary tradition and have gone into the streets again and again. For decades the most revolutionary-minded student ac-

tivists have become determined fighters for the working class.

Communism, socialism and revolutionary ideas are still a strong force throughout the Indian subcontinent. Especially in Bengal, East and West, communist ideas have a great support among the masses, among the intellectuals and middle class. There are a number of left parties in Bangladesh, including some reformist Marxist parties that hold elected office in parliamentary coalition governments of the bourgeois state. The SPB has sought to be a revolutionary challenge, not just a parliamentary opposition.

International guests included representatives from the United Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist, the Sri Lankan New Democratic Party, the Socialist Unity Center of India, the ambassador of the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea, and Workers World Party and the International Action Center in the U.S.

The SPB encourages mutual respect, discussion and unified action or united front actions among the many left parties in Bangladesh. The day after the completion of their convention the Socialist Party sponsored a wide-ranging discussion and question and answer session with the international guests who attended their convention and the leadership of more than 10 left parties, along with independent intellectuals, journalists, filmmakers, Marxist economists, etc. — about 150 people in all.

Many guests remarked about how important it was to have these political discussions. The questions to the delegates from the U.S. concerned the nature of the global capitalist crisis and how intractable it is, the impact of ever expanding U.S. militarism, and why President Barack Obama has continued Bush's imperialist wars.

In India and in Bangladesh as in Europe some socialist and communist parties have entered bourgeois coalition governments to administer the capitalist state. Always on the agenda is a discussion on the nature of the state in underdeveloped and formerly colonized countries and the role of revolutionary forces.

For the representative from Sri Lanka the participants asked about the debacle



Socialist Party of Bangladesh marches in Dhaka.

WW PHOTO: SARA FLOUNDERS

just experienced by the Tamil Tigers and of the representative from Nepal about the coming showdown with the government which, backed by India and the U.S., is threatening them with a similar fate. State power is a burning and immediate question on the Indian subcontinent.

Imperialist underdevelopment, socialist solutions

In two documents, the Conveners' Report of the First Convention and the Thesis on the International Situation, presented in preparation for the First Convention, the SPB gave their view of the international situation politically and the global capitalist crisis that is wreaking havoc on a global scale.

The Convention documents contained serious thinking on the problems facing Bangladesh now. They took up the chaos, lack of planning and profiteering at every level of the capitalist market and the intentional underdevelopment imposed by U.S. imperialism through its banking system, the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

As with so many other countries in Asia and Africa, Bangladesh is deliberately kept underdeveloped, dependent and poor. It is used as just a source of cheap labor by U.S. and British policy and increasingly now by Indian capitalists.

The structural adjustments imposed on Bangladesh led to the forced closing of many domestic industries in order to reorient the economy to cheap labor on imported fabric that is exported as gar-

ments. These policies have made Bangladesh much poorer. One leader of the SPB stressed again and again in every conversation, "All Western 'help' is designed to make us helpless."

Poverty and unequal distribution in Bangladesh have grown far worse in recent decades. Almost 80 percent of the population is still peasant. But landlessness among the peasantry has grown drastically from 20 percent landless at the time of independence in 1971 to 70 percent of the peasant population reduced to day laborers and indebted sharecroppers without land today.

In a country of 150 million people, 90 million live on the edge of starvation. Millions of workers are forced to go abroad to send home survival remittances.

The SPB explains that the country is fabulously rich in fertile land and a 12-month growing season. Yet more than half the population is seriously malnourished. Though Bangladesh has oil, gas, coal, iron and other minerals, it is denied modern technology and efficient distribution. It is capitalist chaos at its worst.

The SPB provided guests with a great deal of political information, along with an analysis of the many problems facing the country. Each analysis was infused with revolutionary optimism and determination to organize the most desperately poor workers and millions of landless peasants to step into a historic role of challenging capitalist chaos and imperialist domination.

Next, a first-hand view of the struggle in Bangladesh.

How the U.S. – and Google – censors the Internet

By Gary Wilson

Since mid-January, hardly a day has gone by without some report in the big-business-controlled media about China and censorship of the Internet. The primary reports were about Google's declaration in early January that it may stop complying with Chinese laws that are meant to block illegal Internet activity, including spying. This was followed by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's blistering cold-war-style speech that directly attacked China.

Such threats, coming from the U.S. government, must be taken seriously. After all, this kind of speech from the heads of the State Department preceded the U.S. invasions of Yugoslavia, Iraq and Afghanistan. Not that an invasion of China is imminent, but this is war talk from the State Department and must be treated as such.

Outside the U.S., the events are seen quite differently than the carefully-coiffed version presented in the U.S. media. China has done nothing out of the norm for any country with respect to regulating the

Internet. Even the U.S. has similar laws and restrictions on criminal activities.

Given the way the U.S. media report this, it is important to make it clear that China does not control the Internet. Control of the Internet lies completely in the hands of the U.S., or more precisely, the U.S. military-industrial complex. And access to the core services is 100 percent controlled in the U.S. In fact, U.S. domination of the Internet was reflected in a bill that was proposed in the U.S. Senate last August that sought to give the president the authority to take full control of the Internet with a national security declaration.

As for censorship of the Internet, no country does more to block global access to the Internet than the U.S. government.

This was illustrated on Jan. 1. That's the day that a hammer went down and all access to a substantial number of Web sites was blocked to all people from countries on a list created by the State Department. Cuba, Syria, Sudan and Iran are included on the list. A search of the State Department's Web site and a Google search did

not turn up the names of other countries on this list.

SourceForge is a Web site that's now blocked. SourceForge says it "offers free access to hosting and tools for developers of free/open source software." As of Jan. 1, all access to SourceForge, including downloads of free software, has been blocked to any user from a country on the State Department's list. Previously in 2008, SourceForge started blocking access to any free software developer who wished to contribute to any free software project.

This development at SourceForge, because it is a central point for free and open access to software, has produced an international storm of protest. But SourceForge is not alone. Sun Microsystems, Mathworks and Microchip — companies that sell software used by developers — have also made their Web sites unreachable to any user from the State Department's list. And most prominent in all this turns out to be Google and the Google Code Web site that is also for free software projects.

There is already a protest movement among free software developers to move projects off Google Code and SourceForge and onto Web sites in countries that allow open access to all. One prominent free software project, NautilusSVN, has done this in response to the blockage by Google of access to Google Code. The developers have moved their project onto Ubuntu Linux's Launchpad and renamed it RabbitVCS, though there is some concern that the London-based Launchpad could become subjected to the U.S. blockade.

In a report on ArabCrunch, Syrian computer engineer Abdulrahman Idlbi says, "It's worth mentioning that Internet content blockage against some countries is not restricted to getting software or services. It is really disappointing to try to participate in a global humanitarian event such as Earth Hour or the Google Haiti crisis response to make a donation, to find out that parts of those Web sites (powered by Google) are blocked." Idlbi found that he was not able to make a donation to Haiti relief efforts. □

Las elecciones en Massachusetts y los desafíos futuros

Por Fred Goldstein

La victoria del derechista Scott Brown en las elecciones senatoriales de Massachusetts pone en una perspectiva clara la crisis para los y las trabajadores y oprimidos de este país. Es una de liderazgo, política y organización.

Muchas lecciones han sido extraídas por el liderazgo del Partido Demócrata, expertos liberales, líderes sindicales y otros sobre lo que pasó en Massachusetts. Pero, puesto de manera simple, hay una lección primordial. El récord sombrío del liderazgo del Partido Demócrata y la sumisión de la administración de Obama a los intereses de los bancos y corporaciones han dejado a la base del Partido Demócrata en la intemperie, llevando a la desilusión y a la confusión.

Al tener que escoger entre las necesidades de su base — los/as trabajadores, las comunidades pobres y oprimidas y la clase media progresista — y sus amos corporativos, el liderazgo del Partido Demócrata mostró de nuevo que es prisionero de las corporaciones y sus agentes de cabildeo. La administración está rodeada de banqueros, oficiales de finanzas, representantes de corporaciones, generales y almirantes al igual que las otras administraciones.

El entusiasmo comprensible y las altas esperanzas que acompañaron la histórica elección del primer presidente africano-americano, y el retroceso del racismo que esto representó, están disminuyendo en la medida en que Barack Obama sigue el trillado camino que siguen todos aquellos que llegan al puesto de jefe ejecutivo del imperialismo estadounidense.

La desilusión y la ira esperada, fueron expresadas primero con la derrota del multimillonario liberal y ex banquero, el Gobernador John Corzine de Nueva Jersey. La derrota de la Fiscal General de Massachusetts, Martha Coakley, candidata demócrata para el senado del estado, es otra expresión de la misma desilusión.

El problema en este momento es que la derecha se está aprovechando de esta desilusión y tratará de ganar más territorio dentro de la clase obrera y la clase media para fomentar el racismo, la ideología militarista y la división en medio de la creciente crisis económica.

Las fuerzas detrás de Brown

Esto es lo que permitió que Brown, un republicano poco conocido, senador derechista del estado de Massachusetts, derrotara a la fiscal general del estado en las elecciones del 20 de enero por el curul del Senador Ted Kennedy quien se mantuvo en ese puesto por casi medio siglo.

La victoria de Brown ha llevado al Partido Demócrata y a la administración Obama a una crisis. Este perturbó el balance de votación en el Senado, privando a los Demócratas de una mayoría que se opondría a una maniobra obstruccionista y que de esta manera amenazara el proyecto de ley de la salud y posiblemente el resto de la agenda legislativa de la administración de Obama. La victoria de Brown significa además que los candidatos Demócratas pueden encontrarse en peligro en las elecciones congresionales del 2010.

Brown es un republicano que hizo una campaña con una mezcla de posiciones derechistas y reaccionaras además de apelaciones demagógicas para la clase obrera. Su campaña fue apoyada por el llamado movimiento del Partido del Té — una red de ultra derechistas y elementos fascistas que surgió durante los mítines públicos que lanzaron ataques racistas y acusaciones anti comunistas fraudulentas contra el Presidente Obama.

Los grupos del Partido del Té están coordinados bajo la cobertura del Freedom Works, una fundación derechista encabezada por Dick Armey. Este ex senador del estado de Texas utilizó los fondos de la industria de la salud, el petróleo y las compañías de utilidades para la creación de movimientos “populares” falsos en contra del proyecto de ley de salud y los programas para el medio ambiente.

Redes derechistas alrededor del país enviaron millones de dólares a la campaña de Brown.

Brown denunció el inflado proyecto de ley de salud, los arreglos tras bastidores de la administración de Obama y el gasto público. Apeló al temor de la gente a un aumento de impuestos y exigió la creación de trabajos. Iba por todos lados conduciendo una camioneta para crear la imagen de un “hombre del pueblo”.

Al mismo tiempo salió a favor de la tortura y rechazó la representación legal de prisioneros como los de Guantánamo. Fue campeón de la llamada “guerra contra el terror”. Se opuso a la legislación que legalizaría a trabajadores/as indocumentados/as. Condenó la legislación comercial para reducir las emisiones de carbono — no porque es totalmente ineficaz, sino porque es “una intervención del gobierno”.

Añadiendo a la confusión y al engaño, Brown elogió a Ted Kennedy y no aprovechó la oportunidad para utilizar el racismo contra Obama. Por otra parte, fue apoyado por los elementos racistas y fascistas más virulentos en la sociedad capitalista, a los cuales sin duda les reforzó políticamente.

Martha Coakley, por otra parte, hizo una campaña mediocre y tardía, básicamente defendiendo el programa de la administración de Obama sobre el cuidado de la salud, la creación de empleos, etc.

Se han publicado interminables análisis sobre el revés de esta elección. Algunos lo atribuyen a la mala campaña dirigida por Coakley. Se quejan de que el resultado habría sido diferente si hubiera tenido una campaña más efectiva y no hubiera cometido errores, como el no reconocer el nombre de un famoso lanzador de las Medias Rojas de Boston, si no hubiera aparentado ser tan distante, si no se hubiera ido de vacaciones, etc., etc.

Pero esto es una visión muy limitada de la derrota. ¿Cuáles son las circunstan-

cias que permitieron que un error o una campaña mediocre fueran decisivas en la carrera electoral por un puesto “liberal” ocupado por la dinastía multimillonaria Kennedy durante décadas? Obama ganó Massachusetts con el 67 por ciento. Brown derrotó a Coakley con un 52 por ciento frente al 47 por ciento que sacó ella.

Emergencia económica y los arreglos tras bastidores

Bob Herbert, el único columnista africano-americano de opinión del New York Times, escribió un airado artículo el 23 de enero después de la victoria de Brown, titulado “Todavía no entienden”. Herbert escribió: “Hay una emergencia económica en el país con millones y millones de estado- unidenses llenos de miedo y ansiedad mientras luchan con un desempleo prolongado, ejecuciones hipotecarias, quiebras personales y falta de oportunidades para ellos y sus hijos”.

En cuanto al proyecto de ley de salud que Coakley tuvo que defender y contra el cual Brown se pronunció, Herbert escribió: “Nadie en su sano juicio podía creer que un sistema viable, eficiente y rentable pudiera salir del terrible plan que finalmente emergió del Senado después de largos meses de dudosas alianzas, acuerdos vergonzosos secretos, sobornos extravagantes y abyecta capitulación ante las compañías de seguros y gigantes empresas farmacéuticas”.

Añádase a esto que los bancos han humillado a la administración de Obama en primer lugar al aceptar el rescate del gobierno y luego dar miles de millones de dólares en bonos a sus ejecutivos. Ahora están recogiendo ganancias récord, negándose a prestar dinero o a reajustar las hipotecas, y trabajando para sabotear todas las restricciones a sus manipulaciones financieras.

Mientras tanto, el desempleo junto al subempleo es de 27 a 30 millones. Tres millones de hogares entraron en ejecución de hipotecas el año pasado, y se esperan millones más. El hambre, la pobreza, la reducción de los salarios, las presiones en el trabajo, la pérdida de la atención de la salud y todas las otras dificultades están aumentando.

La cuestión más urgente para los/as trabajadores/as es cuándo esto va a terminar y quién la finalizará.

El recurso más poderoso que tienen los/as trabajadores/as en esta sociedad capitalista son los sindicatos. Pero actualmente, los/as miembros/as de base están paralizados/as por la total ausencia de una independencia o de lucha al nivel del liderazgo.

En la elección de Massachusetts, un 29 por ciento de quienes votaron por Brown habían votado por Obama en el 2008. Una encuesta hecha por el AFL-CIO

mostró que los/as miembros/as de sindicatos votaron 49 por ciento por Brown y 46 por ciento por Coakley. Estas son las cifras en las cuales debemos enfocarnos.

Los/as trabajadores/as y otras personas que votaron por un presidente africano-americano en el 2008 apoyaron ahora a un candidato derechista a causa de la demagogia y porque no había otra opción.

Reto a luchar

Ese es el reto a todos los elementos avanzados en los Estados Unidos. Todos/as aquellos/as que están opuestos/as al capitalismo, al racismo y al imperialismo, que son partidarios/as de los/as trabajadores/as y los/as oprimidos/as en los sindicatos, las comunidades, los movimientos políticos en las universidades, estudiantes y jóvenes, deben encontrar una forma organizativa para unirse a nivel nacional y regional para lanzar un movimiento masivo para luchar — para luchar por empleos y para formular un programa mínimo que pueda expresar los intereses de los/as trabajadores/as y los/as oprimidos/as independientemente de los partidos capitalistas.

Los liberales, socialdemócratas y el liderazgo sindical están estancados en el terreno electoral como su forma primaria de lucha política. Son directa o indirectamente, seguidores del Partido Demócrata o dependientes de él.

La lucha electoral es una forma legítima de lucha pero no puede remplazar la movilización de las masas y la lucha clasista. La manera de influir legislaciones en este país ha sido históricamente a través de huelgas, brazos caídos, tomas, rebeliones y resistencia masiva de todo tipo.

La crisis en el Partido Demócrata se ha convertido en una crisis de los sindicatos y los socialdemócratas en general. Ellos han conducido a las masas a apoyar al liderazgo del Partido Demócrata. Este es el partido que acaba de mandar 30.000 tropas a Afganistán, satura Pakistán con cohetes teledirigidos, todavía ocupa Irak, mandó 12.000 tropas para ocupar Haití, apoya a Israel en su supresión de los/as palestinos/as, construye bases militares en Colombia, organizó un golpe de estado en Honduras, etc.

La crisis del Partido Demócrata no debe ser nuestra crisis. Debe convertirse en una oportunidad para el movimiento amplio de trabajadores/as, especialmente sus sindicatos, para declarar su independencia, para desenmascarar los intereses capitalistas detrás de la crisis económica, para luchar por la unidad de clase de los/as trabajadores/as — organizados/as o no, documentados/as o no, empleados/as o desempleados/as — para fomentar una lucha en las calles y los lugares de empleo y para promulgar su propio programa político.

No debemos permitir que los derechistas manipulen la desilusión en medio de esta crisis económica. La clase trabajadora en este país es un gigante dormido. Es hora de que cada revolucionario/a piense profunda y largamente sobre cómo ayudar a despertar este gigante y hacer temblar la tierra debajo de la decadente clase dominante cuyo sistema de ganancias está trayendo interminables sufrimientos. □



Libertad para los cinco cubanos: Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, Ramón Labañino Salazar, Rene González Sehwerert Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez y Fernando González Llort.